

DCI REMARKS TO ANPA
20 September 1978
CIA Headquarters

First, I understand Bob Bowie touched on this a little bit this morning, but I would like to reemphasize that speaking very sincerely, here, that the importance of good intelligence for our decision makers/^{to this country} is perhaps greater today than at any time in past, perhaps since World War II. Because if you look back at the margin of superiority we had 30 years ago in military matters, the independence we had and the dominance of the world scene economically, and the tremendous influence we had politically compared with today. I think you can _____ that the leverage of knowing what the other fellow was doing, and not just not just the Russian fellow/ the Russian military fellow that we focused on so much in the "World War II", but so many countries around the world and so many areas besides military, economic and political, grain forecasting, the health of foreign leaders, psychology of terrorism, the intricate web of narcotics trafficking, all these kinds of things are predominantly important to us. They have vastly expanded the areas of expertise which people must deal with. Let me not overstate it. The Soviet military threat must remain our number one priority. We have got to keep our finger on that.

But over all, our ability to supply the decision makers needs, whether in the Department of Commerce, Treasury or the State Department and Defense Department as well as, of course, the White House, I believe is more important to these people today when they have less edge of superiority in which to do their dealings.

Secondly, the techniques by which we collect the information which is the grist of Bob Bowie's analysis as you were hearing from him today, has been changing. We have advanced the technological systems of collecting intelligence which draw upon/sophistication, superiority of our country. They give us one of

great edges we have in American intelligence. Specifically, we collect intelligence by intercepting signals that are floating through the air, by taking pictures--these are the two technical systems I mentioned. And, by the traditional human intelligence agent, the spy. Over the last 15 years or so technical systems, Signals intelligence, photographic systems have just burgeoned with data that they bring into us. They have brought that new capability to our intelligence analysis. But, sometimes there is a mistaken impression that this means the human intelligence agent is no longer necessary, can be supplanted. It is true to this respect that to the degree that we ever get something with a technical system, ^{and} /not with human life we will do it. We always prefer, almost always prefer to do it by the technical system. But generally speaking the technical ~~system~~ tells you what happened in some country yesterday, it doesn't tell you why it happened or it doesn't tell you what is going to happen tomorrow. We draw ^{inferences} ~~inferences~~ out of all _____ I'm saying to you, but generally speaking more technically collected intelligence we have, the more we need to apply the human intelligence agent to supplement it. Because his forte is finding out why. His forte is probing people's thinking. His forte is going and getting specifically what we want, not what happens to be available on the airwaves or the photographs. You can tell him against what you specifically need. So what is different today is a great need for a complimentary of all of these systems. A great need to insure we are using them to the best advantage in their particular capability and filling holes that each one has with the other one. To that extent, the President last January augmented my authority as the Director of Central Intelligence with respect to my job as head of the CIA to coordinate the total national effort in these ^{collection} technical and human/areas. That program, I think, is working well and is intended to insure there is not unnecessary duplication of expense, that there is also not a gap between what we are doing here. That we don't fail to get

what we really need for this country.

The area I would like to address _____, in both the human and the technical collection areas we are suffering from significant losses over the past year or two. Losses due to exposures, leaks, or to espionage. We have had a number of unfortunate espionage cases, we have had a great number of very costly leaks. At the same time, I recognize very fully that we have had too much secrecy in our government. Too much classification of material. You may know that we have tried over the last year and a half to emphasize greater openness to you the media. A greater willingness to talk about what we do. What we are talking about, and as we have today, you have noticed been on Bob Bowie's side the production side, the analytic side. We can take out what we have analyzed those facts that tell you how we got it, what our sources are, as you understand as well as I do. Then we feel we can go public and we can share more with the American citizenry. So, we are trying to be more open on the one hand because it also helps us to reduce the corpus of classified information that we made. If we have too much, you don't respect it, its not protected and we have these leaks that will occur. On the other hand, I assure you I feel I am in a real competition with you. I am doing everything I possibly can to tighten the screws so that your reporters don't get information that we feel is classified. I feel it is your privilege, your job, your right to get everything you can. Whether you publish it or not, is your problem, your ethic, not mine. But we must, from my point of view, if we are going to preserve delicate sources these abilities either with the technical systems or the human to gain the information that I think our decision makers require, we must be able to protect those sources much better than we have been doing in recent years. These are very costly to us. John asked me about foreign liaison. Yes, foreign liaison is nervous about this. Yes, we have trouble with some of our agents in the field. Who knows what trouble we are having with ~~new~~ recruiting new agents. If a fellow

doesn't come and volunteer or doesn't respond to your suggestion, you never know whether its because he read in the paper the name of our last agent, and so on. I don't think the damage to our intelligence capability at this point is ~~serious~~ or irreparable, but I do sincerely believe that a continuation of this trend, a continuation of this sense of lack of confidence that we can keep a secret could be disastrous over time. On the same point, let me emphasize I recognize fully there are those dangers in a government organization having the right to retain secrets and not be subject to public scrutiny. We have, I believe, out of the crucible of the three years or so we have gone through of intense public criticism of the intelligence community forged a series of oversight procedures that give a check for the public that we are not abusing our secrecy. I call these surrogate public oversight procedures. A surrogate to the public are intense interest by the President and Vice President in our activities and my regular reporting to them; an intelligence oversight board under the President, Governor Scranton, Senator Gore and Tom Farmer of Washington, reports only to the President and only responsible for the legality and propriety of what is going on in the intelligence world. Two committees of Congress, both dedicated exclusively to oversight of the intelligence process. I really applaud Mac Greenfield's editorial page article this morning in the Washington Post talking about whistle-blowers and the fact that they are not all heroes as they have come to be almost commonly excepted in our country. I suggest that when the whistle blowers really are dedicated to improving things, rather than getting fame and fortune that in intelligence they can go to one or another of these oversight mechanisms, raise their complaints, and if they don't get satisfaction they still have you to fall back on.

Let me respond to some question.

Q. Admiral, how much information do you get from American newsmen both in this country and abroad.

A. Very little, rather little. We have, as you know, ~~eschewed~~ ^{eschewed} any formal, paid, contractual relationships with members of the American media, anybody credited in an American media organization. We have not/ ^{eschewed} the fact that you are just as much citizens than anyone else and if you want to share things with us voluntarily we are here and we are happy to receive them. We give lots of briefings to you, we haven't eschewed that either. You want to know what we can tell you on an unclassified basis. How many do you have a week Herb?

Herb: We are averaging 3 or 4 a week now, maybe even 5. Suzanne Black runs our news briefing programs.

Admiral: Suzanne is that right--you can contradict him

There used to be a much closer relationship. I will be very candid with you, I'm glad it is terminated, because you know what I have found in the last few months around here? I found because years ago we used to encourage the connection overseas with newsmen, because they were good sources. Your people know much more about what is going on in many of these countries than most people. But those ties don't end when you leave Bucharest or wherever it is and there are still far too many, in my opinion, connections between our directors of operations, the people who go out and collect the human intelligence and their old friends in the news media, and I know that is where some of these leaks have come from. Because we encouraged those connections once upon a time, and it is hard to discourage them afterwards. I think over the long run we will net out better this way.

Q. Admiral Turner, following up on that question. Is there a compelling reason why the CIA would deny access under the Freedom of Information Act to request by newspapers to find out what relationships their may have been between reporters of particular newspapers with the CIA in previous years?

A. Yes, absolutely, we are opposed to that unless ordered by a court will not disclose prior relationships that were established on a covert basis. We made an informal contract with you 10 years ago, we feel we are obliged to honor that. If you want to announce it, that is one thing. How can I go somebody else today, not a newspaper man and say I'm making a relationship with you on a quiet basis here and I don't intend ever to expose it, if I do this in the case you cite.

Q. Has the field of counter-espionage been pretty well defined now?

A. We have done a great deal to emphasize counter intelligence, counter espionage. We have strengthened the organization under it. I have put one of Bob Bowie's right hand men, I took him off one of the most important jobs in Bob's organization to headup the counter intelligence function in the Agency because he, in my opinion, was the best qualified man. I brought aboard a special assistant in my own office who is dedicated _____ counterintelligence. It is a very difficult field, it is one in which you can become paranoid overnight, its one in which there must extremely close cooperation with the FBI. We have that responsibility to the United States, we have it abroad. You can't separate them that much so you have to have a handoff procedure, a coordination procedure that is improved markedly since Hoover's day. I think it has improved ~~even~~ in the last six months even with the advent of what happened to be another classmate of mine, Bill Webster of the FBI and that means that connection is very easy for me right now. So, it needs constant attention. One of the disadvantages to us of detente in intelligence is that we are unfortunately more vulnerable as the result of detente than are they, i.e., there are a lot more Soviets or Warsaw Pact people that come to this country today than before. You know it is easier for them to blend in here than it is for us even under detente to try to go and blend in over there. In addition, I have never been to the Soviet Union but people that have tell me it is not difficult to tell you are under very intense surveillance there and we don't even have the assets in the FBI over here to do that kind of thing in this country. We have to be very selective, we just don't have that quantity of capability.

I am not downplaying detente which has of course has a whole other facet of benefits. But in the intelligence field it makes our counterintelligence problem more difficult.

Q. Who is next best in the field of intelligence? What country?

A. The Soviet Union. Intelligence today, because of this advent of the technical systems has become a two nation proposition. There are only two countries in the world who can afford the full panoply of intelligence activities. The Soviets and ourselves. I am not really trying to downgrade the quality of the input that our British, French and Italian and other allied intelligence services make. But I don't think they would in any way dispute what I am saying to you and I am not trying to be _____ to them. Saying they simply do not have the full range of capability. The British as you would suspect are still superb within the limits of the size and the money they can afford in their intelligence field. We cooperate with different degrees of intimacy, obviously with countries we have different degrees of confidence in. We do a great deal with our liaison, with other intelligence services we get a great deal of benefit from them, so I don't want to downplay them in that sense. But the pure facts of the matter are, only we on the freeworld side can bring it all together. They can give us pieces and we can feed back to them results, but we are the only free intelligence service that can bring all the collection capabilities to bear in one place. Similarly, I think it is very much the same in the Soviets. They are stronger than we in the human intelligence field, they put a tremendous quantity of effort into that. I don't think they are really better, as I started to say. I think that, on balance, we probably get the best of human intelligence with the Soviets. They don't need it really as much as we, they read it in newspapers and magazines so much. We get much less because we have a smaller effort under human intelligence today but it is very valuable to us. I think we are well ahead of them in the technical field. And finally I would say all this collection doesn't do you any good if

the analysts don't interpret it well, properly and I really have an abiding conviction that in a free society like ours you can do that a lot better and a lot more objectively than you can in a closed totalitarian society.

Q. Would you comment on the probability to counter Soviet political activity, political diversions and political activities outside the United States?

A. We counter Soviet subversion and political activities outside the United States. This touches on the delicate and important area of covert action, political action which of course is where the Intelligence Community and the Central Intelligence Agency in particular have gained the most criticism, the most black eyes in the revelations and allegations that have been made. I would be very candid with you that we do less, do less covert political action, the influence of events having a counter influence to a Soviet action in a foreign country today than we did or attempted five or ten years ago. At the same time, I think it is a less applicable technique for our country at this time. I have looked at many covert action proposals, I have solicited many covert action proposals so that I would be ready if called upon. It is not my job to foster them, to encourage them. My job if called upon is to be ready to execute them. I have not found that we were wanting, that we were missing substantial opportunities to further the interest of this country because we didn't do a covert action the year and a half I have been here. Mentioning to Otto just before your lunch, one of things we did in the past as you know is to help fund free politicians who were running campaigns in democratic countries, who were running against people who were financed by the Soviets. I think a lot of those same politicians today would be concerned by taking money from us for fear of a leak that they would be looked on as a lackey of the United States. In short, that is just one example of why the old covert action techniques are not as applicable. So, some of the arrows in our trove aren't there as it were, but I'm not sure either we or the Soviets would find them as

useful as they were in the past. Let me finally say that despite this I feel very strongly that we must in this Agency maintain a capability for covert action on the chance that the circumstances would change, the attitudes of this country and others would alter over years and we cannot be found wanting. We can't be like the virgins with the lamps who didn't have any oil in them, when the time comes you have to kind of gear up and be ready. So, we are maintaining a residual capability here, we are still doing some covert action but it really wouldn't make a good 007 novel if we released it all.

Q. Admiral, where does the decision making authority for that kind of action rest?

A. The process is about like the following. If one of the policy makers, State, Defense, National Security Staff think that covert action might supplement other US policies in some particular circumstance, they come to us, we go back with a proposal as to what we think we could accomplish. That is reviewed by the National Security Council, recommendation is made to the President, the President must sign the directive to undertake the action. I must then notify up to 8 committees of the Congress that we are about to undertake this or have undertaken it if it somehow is done on a urgent basis. That is required by something known as the Hughes-Ryan Amendment, the notification and the President's signature. That is the process it is really under tight control, we are not in the business of going out on our own without a risk of going to jail at the same time.

Q. Admiral how can it possibly be a covert action with 8 committees of Congress?

A. It only can if there is a very unanimity within the Congress. Congress is very responsible in terms of keeping secrets, in my opinion. When the realize the national interest is involved. But when you get this mixed up with partisan dispute up there then you are in real trouble.

Q. How specific in detail is that posed to Congress have to be.

A. Well, this is a constant problem I have. I am required by law of the Congress to protect our sources and methods of collecting intelligence. I have to wrestle

with my conscience frequently as to what I will tell to who, under that circumstance. And obviously, particularly with a human agent situation one bears a very tremendous sense of personal responsibility here when you are risking someone's life. The Congress never has asked me, I never would tell them the name of an agent or enough to identify him. So, I am always treading a fine line up there. They know enough to scotch an operation, they have to if they just want to take it out to the public. Then ^{there} /are authorized procedures within the Congress for doing that. In short, theoretically if they disagree with my announcement, I am not asking permission from them to do a covert action I am announcing it, their procedure is to meet in a secret session of the chamber and vote whether to scotch by announcing it, or appeal to the President, or what. Congress has been quite reasonable with us here and not stressing over such detail as to very seriously compromise an action.

Q. How much input did your Agency have in the Panama Canal thing?

A. In that instance, policy issue as to whether we wanted to keep the Canal or not, we stay scrupulously out of the policy business because otherwise we will be accused of planting intelligence. It was my job to estimate for policy makers what would be the reaction in Panama, what would be the reaction in the rest of Central South America to movement one way or the other on the Canal, estimate the degree of Cuban influence and activity in Panama, it always went out into the press, sometimes exceeding what should have gone out in Torrijos connections in dealings with his family in the narcotics business and so on. We did business in all those areas, of course take a stand on whether it is a good Treaty or a bad Treaty.

Q. What about Nicaragua and Iran as far as any warning to the Administration?

A. Well, we have been watching of course the Nicaraguan situation over a long period of time, it is difficult to predict exactly when this upsurge would come, but it wasn't difficult to see that it was going to be a continual testing down there. We had thought for some time that Somoza had the loyalty of the guard and forces

to keep it under control. I guess today that is still the situation. On the other hand, it will never be like it was again after this demonstration of opposition at this point. I think now we are in a very difficult situation that could go into a protracted guerilla type warfare that could drag the country down economically. Can there be some middle ground in between so we don't go all the way from a dictator to a marxist situation. Very difficult to estimate whether a more moderate opposition group can coalesce sufficiently. There hasn't been a critical mass there in our estimation, up until now maybe under the pressure of these _____ there will be that coalesce. I think a good deal of that pertains to Iran too. The Shah is in a much stronger position relatively than Smoza is today probably. He does have control of the country and a lot of reason to be able to keep that. At the same time it will never be the same for him either because the depth of this moslem movement has been taken advantage by the left wing or communist side also, but it is fundamentally rooted in the differences between the moslems hierarchy and the Shah has gotten to be taken into account there. Overall my prognosis is better for Smoza but in either country will there be the same old strong control that has been in the past.